

Redlands (Robert Carter House)
State Route 708
Carters Bridge vicinity
Albemarle County
Virginia

HABS No. VA-1245

HABS
VA,
2-CARB.V,
2-

WRITTEN HISTORIC AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
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HABS
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

REDLANDS
(Robert Carter House)

HABS No. VA-1245

Location: State Route 708, Carters Bridge vicinity, Albemarle County, Virginia

USGS Alberene, VA Quadrangle, 1967, 7.5 min.
Universal Transverse Mercator coordinates:
17.717140.4198750

Present Owner
and Occupant: Robert Hill Carter

Present Use: residence

Significance: Along with the Edward Coles House, Enniscorthy, Old Woodville, and Tallwood, Redlands helps provide a look into the history of the Coles family, long-time Virginia residents. Redlands is one of the most notable Federal mansions in Piedmont Virginia.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of construction: begun c. 1789 and completed after 1809; by 1813, the first floor interior was complete except for one mantel.
2. Original and subsequent owners: Robert Carter and Mary Eliza (Polly) Coles Carter (daughter of John Coles II, of nearby Enniscorthy) had the property built, probably with money from John Coles II.

1809 - Albemarle County Will Book 5-70, 1809, Robert Carter willed property to wife Mary Eliza Coles Carter.

1830 - Albemarle County Deed Book 28-377, 1830, deeded to son, Robert Hill Carter.

1884 - Robert Hill Carter died intestate and thus the property went to his wife, Margaret Smith Carter.

1894 - Willed to son, Robert Smith Carter, and three daughters.

1899 - Remained with two daughters, Misses Mary Coles Carter and Sally Randolph Carter. Upon their deaths, the property went to their nephews, Robert Hill Carter and Dr. Burr Noland Carter. Since 1944, Redlands has remained with Robert Hill Carter.

4. Builder: Martin Thacker (1770[?] - 1838). After his work on Redlands, Thacker also added wings to Bellaire and built Morven, both Albemarle County properties. About 1812, a Mr. Hester of Lynchburg and his workman, Thomas Billups, worked on Redlands.
 5. Alterations and additions: From about 1908 to about 1912, Baltimore architect Howard Sill, FAIA (1867-1927) made renovations to the house in the form of adding modern conveniences and altering several external features. These latter included the north and south porches. He was an associate in the firm of John Russell Pope at the time of his death and had also renovated nearby Morven.
- B. Historical Context: An original land grant in 1730 to John Carter of Shirley Plantation, secretary of the colony and eldest son of Robert "King" Carter, provided the setting for Redlands. John Carter's son Robert had Redlands, named after the red soil predominant in the county, built for him and his wife, Mary Eliza (Polly) Coles Carter, probably with money from her father. The double-pile Redlands remains in the Carter family to the present, and contains a remarkable assemblage of portraits and furniture reflecting their long tenure. Eliza Coles Carter's portrait hangs in the house. During the Civil War, Redlands served as a make-shift hospital for the wounded and as a refuge for Confederate soldiers from Maryland who had to remain in Virginia about one year before returning home. Early in the twentieth century, over 30 Confederate uniforms were found intact in the attic, which is said to be haunted by the ghost of a Confederate soldier.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

- A. General Statement: The two-story, 17-room, five-bay, double-pile brick house is one of the most notable Federal mansions in Piedmont Virginia, distinguished by its curving salon and bedchamber walls. It is symmetrical, has a gracious salon, and faces east. The bed alcove and the concealed stairway to the bedchambers is in the Jeffersonian manner associated with Monticello, Bremo, and Poplar Forest.
- B. Description of Exterior:
1. Foundations: The 4' high cellar is penciled three-course American bond brick with flush joints. Windows are enclosed with nine horizontal bars, diagonally set, with one center vertical bar, and with louvered blinds (not original). A row of headers occurs over the windows, and the 5" wide architrave surround contains a cyma reversa or back bend and a bead at the corner. The water table has a straight slope of mortar over its two-inch projection.

2. Walls: The entire building is sheathed with penciled Flemish bond brick with concave joints and queen's closers at the corners. A typical brick is 2 3/4" x 8" with 1/2" joints. Windows have rubbed-brick jack arches that are about two horizontal bricks in height. Every other jack arch brick has a mid-horizontal pencil line to make it appear as two bricks. A third course (the one above the jack arch) varies. In most cases, the Flemish bond simply continues. In other cases a stretcher bond is used. In one case, there is a rubbed-brick stretcher course. The 7" wide architrave trim contains a cyma reversa molding and a corner bead. The sill with its apron is 4 1/4" high with a concave molding and a terminal bead under which is lead flashing. Split louvered shutters or blinds occur on the first floor. The brick color changes and the masonry skill is reduced on the second floor, indicating that it was completed at a later time.
3. Porches: The north porch in 1900 was wider, encompassing the entire bowed salon. The south porch contains six Tuscan columns with a full entablature above and balustrade on top. The original south porch was narrower. The two end columns are grouped closer together and two piers occur on the wall.
4. Chimneys: The 12 fireplaces culminate in two chimneys. The vaulted brick chimney caps were added between 1915 and 1936.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doors: The six-panel double door on the south elevation has a rectangular transom above containing a fanlight. The bulkhead on the west elevation was installed after 1915. The east bulkhead was in place in 1936.
 - b. Windows: Double-hung windows occur on the first and second floors with 12-over-12 sash. The windows on the second floor are shorter than those on the first floor, thus creating the illusion that the structure is more imposing, a technique also used on the George Wythe house in Williamsburg. On the south elevation, the two center windows on the first floor and the three center ones on the second floor contain nine-over-nine sash. The bowed portion of the north elevation has a series of windows on its second level following this pattern: nine-over-nine, 12-over-12, and nine-over-nine double-hung sash. On the first floor, the center window starts at floor level and contains a rectangular transom above with a fanlight inside. The pedimented dormers of six-over-six double-hung sash with fluted Doric pilasters to the sides were added between 1915 and 1936. The circular window on the west elevation was installed after 1915.

6. Roof: The roof is hipped. Photographs taken in 1900 indicate that it was metal. A modillion cornice terminates the roof.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Cellar:

- a. Stair hall: stair - 14 risers (7 1/2" high) and 11 treads; tread - nosing is 3 1/2" high with a cyma reversa on bottom; floor - concrete; walls - three course American bond brick on all four walls; windows - three square panes over four rectangular panes double-hung sash; dumbwaiter - set in northwest corner; opening at ceiling in northeast corner may have been an original waste disposal shaft.
- b. North bowed-end room: floor - asphalt tile; walls - three course American bond; ceiling - exposed hewn beams with pit sawn boards on a wooden 1" x 3" ledge attached, with insulation in between, to lower portion of the joists (similar to the cellar ceiling at Tallwood, HABS No. VA-1244); joists run north to south and are mortised and pegged into a 15" wide summer beam; ceiling height - 7' 8" to bottom of summer beam and joists; fireplace - three course American bond brick with segmental arch opening (sealed); door - beaded vertical boards with three horizontal brackets with two iron strap hinges; windows - 3' 9" to top of brick window sill, then 6 1/2" more to top of wood sill - four-over-four double-hung sash.
- c. West room: floor - concrete - 2' 10" from floor up to outside grade; walls - three course American bond brick; ceiling - at one time was made of wooden lath and plaster, now made of exposed 5" x 12" joists running north to south, mortised and pegged into two 12"-deep summer beams; ceiling height - 7' 8" to bottom of summer beams and joists; windows - 3' 11" to top of brick sill, then 6" to top of wood sill - four-over-four double-hung sash; fireplace - sealed;
- d. Southeast room: floor - concrete - 2' 10" from floor up to outside grade; walls - three course American bond brick; ceiling - possibly plaster board; east door - beaded vertical boards with three horizontal brackets with wrought iron strap hinges - outside architrave trim pegged and with cyma reversa molding; west doorway - segmental wood lintel with brick row lock course above.

e. NE ROOM

Floor: Raised wood floor.

Base: None

Walls: 3 course American bond on 4 walls.

Cornice: None

Ceiling: A modern material.

Fireplace: Huge segmental-arched opng.

Door: Beaded vertical boards with 3 horizontal brackets with 2 strap hinges.

Originally was the kitchen.

2. FIRST FLOOR

a. ENTRANCE PASSAGE

Floor: 4"-4½" random width wooden floor bds. in E-W direction

Base: 7" wood base with cyma molding on top.

Wainscot: 2'-8" to top of chair rail. Raised wood panels below.

Walls: Plaster

Cornice: 14" deep cornice with back bend and recessed rectangular panels in frieze with triglyphs with double-arched flutes.

Picture rods below cornice.

Ceiling: Plaster. 4'-2½" wide stairway projection in NE corner at ceiling has a symmetrical false projection in opposite corner, creating an 8'-2" flat plane 1'-11½" down from clg.

Ceiling height: 14'-7"

Doors:

South door: 9'-10" high X 2'-2" wide 6-panel (bottom panel taller) double doors with rectangular transom above containing a fanlight; all in a 12'-6" high recess splayed at sides with Greek Revival bevelmold and doors.

West door: 6-panel (Cross and Bible) door. 2 self-closing hinges with plaster overthrow above in semi-circular arch.

East, NE, & NW doors: 6 panel doors with fanlights and keystones with rope moldings above and reeding on under side of arch.

North door: 2'-1" wide double 4-symmetrical panel doors with 3 self-closing hinges.

5½" wide door architrave surround with back bend.

Windows: 2'-8" sill height (matches chair rail height) with 9/9 double hung sash.

b. NORTH BOWED SALON (DRAWING ROOM)

Floor: 4½" floor boards in E-W direction

Base: 7" with cyma molding on top but different from Entrance Passage.

Chair rail: 31½" to top of reeded chair rail.

Walls: Plaster

Cornice: Ornate plaster (?) cornice with buttons, acanthus leaves, egg and dart, half round, drapery swags, rope molding, and ending with a circular bar at base for picture hanging.

Ceiling: Plaster

Fireplace: 5'-0" to top of Adamesque mantel,

Egg and dart bedmold, garlands or swags in frieze with raised

center panel and end blocks containing urns filled with pineapples and other fruit, reeded Doric columns below end blocks with acanthus leaves in capital, marble hearth and surround.

Doors:

East & West doors: 6-panel doors, 7'-4 $\frac{1}{4}$ " high and 8'-10 $\frac{1}{2}$ " to top of Colonial Revival entablature trim, with egg and dart bed mold, swags in frieze, and circular pateras in the raised end blocks. East doorway is false and West door has 2 self-closing hinges.

South door: Same architrave trim and entablature top.

Windows: 9/9 double hung sash with 31 $\frac{1}{2}$ " to top of sill with 12/12 double hung sash (doorway) in center with rectangular opening above with a fanlight.

c. NW ROOM (DINING ROOM)

Floor: 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ " floor boards in E-W direction

Base: 7" high

Wainscot: 31 $\frac{1}{2}$ " to top of chair rail with 2 cyma moldings over raised wood panels.

Walls: Plaster

Cornice: Deep, protruding cornice, ogee at top, dentils, lidded urns with swags between enclosing a burst.

Ceiling: Plaster

Fireplace: 4'-9 $\frac{1}{2}$ " to top of mantel, dentils below, urn with swags to each side on raised center frieze panel, acanthus leaf in end block with acanthus leaves below to form a capital with fluted pilasters below, brick hearth, marble surround.

Doors: All 6-panel doors with self-closing hinges with a 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ " architrave surround with an ogee molding.

d. SW ROOM (SITTING ROOM, STUDY OR LIBRARY)

Floor: 4"-4 $\frac{1}{2}$ " random width floor bds. in E-W direction

Base: 7" high

Wainscot: 31 $\frac{1}{2}$ " to top of chair rail with raised wood panels below.

Walls: Plaster

Cornice: Ornate cornice with leaves under, dentils below, and ornate swags in frieze surrounding a patera.

Ceiling: Plaster

Fireplace: 4'-8 $\frac{1}{2}$ " to top of mantel, ogee below cornice, rope mold, lidded urn in raised center frieze panel, tobacco leaf forms end block console, brick hearth, marble surround.

Doors: 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ " wide architrave surround with only a small back bend and corner bead.

Windows: 31 $\frac{1}{2}$ " to top of sill, two 12/12 double hung sash windows.

e. NE BEDCHAMBER

Floor: 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ " floor bds. in E-W direction

Base: 7" high, no cyma only concave then convex.

Wainscot: 2'-7 $\frac{1}{4}$ " to top of 6" high chair rail ending with a back bend over a plain wood panel.

Walls: Plaster

Cornice: Spread acanthus leaves, dentils, then urns with garlands

between and a burst (similar to present dining room);
extends to top of Window architrave.

Ceiling: Plaster

Fireplace: 4'-9½" to top of mantel, Adam motif (patera) in
end block on a fluted pilaster with fluted triglyphs in
frieze, brick hearth, marble surround.

Doors: Architrave surround similar to that in SE Room, all
three 6-panel doors have self-closing hinges.

Windows: Architrave surround similar to that in SE Room, 2'-7¼"
to top of sill.

f. SE ROOM (now divided into 3 rooms)

Base: 7" with cyma at top.

Wainscot: 2'-7½" to top of 4½" deep chair rail with cyma at top
over plain wood panel.

Walls: Plaster

Cornice: Plain deep Tuscan cornice to top of window architrave (as
it extends in all first floor rooms).

Ceiling: Plaster

Fireplace: 4'-9½" to top of plain mantel, ogee molding under
shelf, simple end blocks, brick hearth, and marble surround.

Doors: 6-panel doors with 2 self-closing hinges.

Windows: 2'-7½" to top of sill

Bathrooms added prior to second floor baths which were installed
c.1910.

g. CURVED ALCOVES

Floor: 2½" floor bds. in E-W direction.

Walls: Horizontal wood on curved walls.

West Alcove contains dumb waiter.

East Alcove contains closet in which is possible waste shaft.

h. STAIR

Enclosed stair with 7½" Risers and 10" Treads with ½" nosing with
a cove molding under.

3'-4" wood wainscot.

Round side wall rail with button at end.

Possible waste shaft near stair bend with 12" X 14" door.

Plain keystone above West door with architrave surround similar
to SW Room.

Walls: Plaster

Cornice: None

Ceiling: Plaster

3. SECOND FLOOR

a. STAIR HALL

Floor: 4½" floor bds. in E-W direction.

Base: 7" high with quarter round and cyma molding on top.

Chair rail: 2'-5½" to top of 4" high chair rail with back bend
at top and concave molding at bottom.

Walls: Plaster

Cornice: c.1'-8" deep ornate Colonial Revival cornice with acanthus
leaves, egg and dart, dentils, anthemion motifs, fluted
frieze with medallions, then appears to be a cyma molding.

Ceiling: Plaster
Ceiling height: 12'-0"
Doors:

West door: 6-panel with self-closing hinges and 5½" wide
architrave surround with a splayed back bend and a bead
at corner in the Colonial Revival manner of this century.
Windows: 5½" side architrave surround with a splayed back bend and
a bead at corner
Stair rail: Ornate ballusters and newel post.
Book cases: 2 free standing cases, one in Egyptian style.

b. BOWED END CHAMBER

Floor: 4½" floor bds. in E-W direction
Base: 8" high with cyma top
Chair rail: 2'-4½" to top of reeded chair rail which is same
as NE chamber.
Walls: Plaster
Cornice: Dentils, ogee molding, and picture molding at base.
Ceiling: Plaster
Fireplace: 4'-10½" to top of mantel, dentils, swags in frieze
with raised center panel with Carter Coat of Arms, figure in
end blocks, human heads with rams horns form pilaster capi-
tals, urn in pilaster, rope molding in architrave, brick
hearth, marble surround.
Doors: Three 6-panel doors with self-closing hinges with 5¼"
wide architrave surround with large quarter round and smaller
back bend and a bead at corner;
Two double-folding doors to bath with ornate glass panes
with dogwood buds in connections of muntins. Bath added
c.1910 in what had been a recessed bed alcove.
Probably 20th century Colonial Revival.

c. SE CHAMBER

Floor: 4½" floor bds. in E-W direction.
Base: 7" high with two cyma moldings on top.
Chair rail: 2'-5" to top of 4 3/8" chair rail with back bend.
Walls: Plaster.
Cornice: Simple shallow cornice with picture mold at base.
Ceiling: Plaster
Fireplace: 4'-3½" to top of mantel, fluted pilasters with simple
end blocks.
Doors: Two 6-panel doors with self-closing hinges.
Windows: 12/12 double-hung sash with 2'-5" to top of sill.

d. SE BATH

6-panel door with self-closing hinges.
Bath added about 1910.
Was a wine closet.

e. NE CHAMBER

Floor: 4½" floor bds. in E-W direction.
Base: 7" high base with semi-circular top.
Chair rail: 2'-5" to top of 4½" chair rail with back bend molding
and reeding.

Walls: Plaster

Cornice: Cyma Recta at top, dentils, and picture molding at base.

Ceiling: Plaster

Fireplace: 4'-8½" to top of mantel, acanthus leaf scroll in end blocks, small garlands, urn in raised center frieze panel, meander in architrave.

Doors: Two 6-panel doors with self-closing hinges and 5 5/8" architrave surround with quarter rounds and bead at corner.

Windows: 2'-5" to top of sill with 12/12 double-hung sash.

Probably 20th Century Colonial Revival.

f. NW CHAMBER

Floor: 4½" floor bds. in E-W direction.

Chair rail: 2'-5½" to top of reeded chair rail similar to Bowed End Chamber.

Walls: Plaster

Cornice: Similar to Bowed End Chamber with ogee molding, dentils, and picture mold.

Ceiling: Plaster

Fireplace: 4'-9" to top of mantel, acanthus leaves, egg and dart, rope mold, dentils, fluted frieze with raised center panel with Carter Coat of Arms, swags, plain end blocks on engaged Ionic fluted columns, brick hearth, and marble surround.

Doors: 6-panel door with self-closing hinges with architrave surround similar to NE Chamber.

Windows: 2'-5½" to top of window sill with guttae under and 12/12 double-hung sash.

Finished in the early 20th Century.

g. SW CHAMBER

Floor: Floor bds. in E-W direction.

Base:

Chair rail: Simple one.

Walls: Plaster

Cornice: Simple entablature.

Ceiling: Plaster

Fireplace: Simple mantel, plain frieze, and simple reeded raised end blocks with reeded pilaster below.

h. STAIR TO ATTIC

Open string stair with simple rectangular balusters, 3 per tread, and a simple square newel post and cyma scroll on stair ends, vertical match board paneling on walls. Installed in early 20th Century as was the bath.

i. ATTIC

Dormers: 6/6 double-hung sash with 4'-0½" sill height.

3 King Post Trusses with 7½" wide X 10½" deep (face) rafters, 11" wide X 9" on face of king post, 7½" wide X 5" deep (face) diagonal braces. These are similar to those in the Carpenters' Company designs of 1786 in Phila., plate VI.

3" X 5" rafters 2'-0" o.c., no ridge board, and 34° slope in roof. Servants' quarters occur at the stair landing.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: Situated on the eastern side of Carter's Mountain, the house is on the crest of a knoll amidst large trees and faces 15 degrees to southwest with splendid views of the hills of southern Albemarle County.
2. Historic landscape design: To the east were boxwood-lined flower and vegetable gardens consisting of 12 squares. Some were laid out in the form of a Maltese cross, a reflection of Robert Carter's Masonic affiliation. The gardens are entered between four boxwoods planted by Mary Coles Carter in 1798, when she laid them out.
3. Outbuildings: Among the outbuildings were a log slave quarters with a central chimney, a dairy, and a smokehouse. The latter two are still extant to the northeast. Other slave houses were set directly to the north of the mansion. While the main house was being built, the couple lived in a wooden hall-parlor cottage with a lean-to behind and an exterior gable end chimney, built 1791, east of the present house. This building later became a weaving house and the home of a black shoemaker. This cottage burned circa 1915.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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